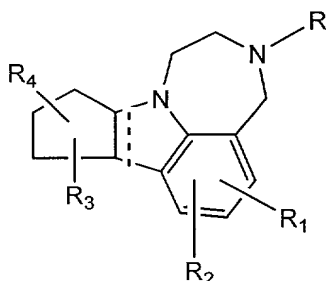


**What is Claimed:**

1. A process for the synthesis of compounds of formula I:



I

wherein

R is hydrogen;

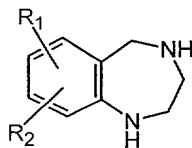
R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub> are each, independently, hydrogen, alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms, alkoxy of 1-6 carbon atoms, halogen, fluorinated alkyl of from 1 to 6 carbon atoms, -CN, -NH-SO<sub>2</sub>-alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms, -SO<sub>2</sub>-NH-alkyl of 1-6 carbon atoms, alkyl amide of 1-6 carbon atoms, amino, alkylamino of 1-6 carbon atoms, dialkylamino of 1-6 carbon atoms per alkyl moiety, fluorinated alkoxy of 1-6 carbon atoms, acyl of 2-7 carbon atoms, or aroyl, preferably phenoyl or thiophenoyl;

R<sub>3</sub>, R<sub>4</sub> are each independently hydrogen, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>6</sub> alkyl, cycloalkyl of from 3 to 7 carbon atoms or -CH<sub>2</sub>-cycloalkyl of from 3 to 7 carbon atoms;

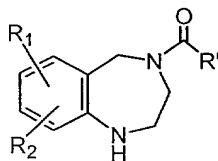
wherein the dashed line indicates an optional double bond;

the process comprising the steps of:

- a) acylating a benzodiazepine compound of the formula:

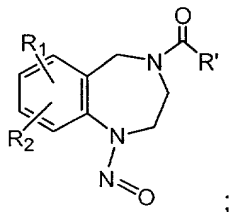


to give an acylated benzodiazepine of the formula:

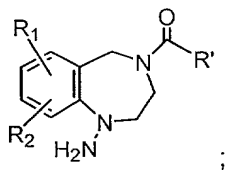


wherein R' represents represents alkyl of from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, preferably 1 to 6 carbon atoms, or a benzyl or naphthyl group;

- b) reacting the acylated benzodiazepine of step a) with a nitrosating agent  
5 to provide an acylated nitroso benzodiazepine compound of the formula:

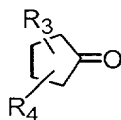


- c) reducing the acylated nitroso benzodiazepine compound of step b) to  
yield an acylated 1-aminobenzodiazepine compound of the formula

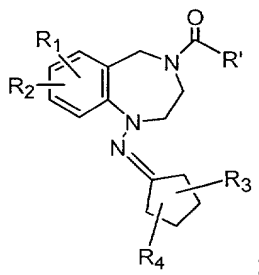


10

- d) allowing the acylated 1-aminobenzodiazepine compound of step c) to  
react with a cyclopentanone compound of the formula:

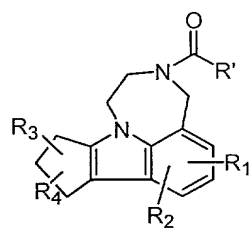


to provide a cyclopentylideneamino benzodiazepine compound of the formula:



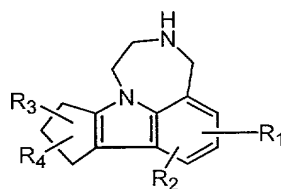
15

- e) reacting the cyclopentylideneamino benzodiazepine compound of step d)  
to provide an acylated compound of the formula:



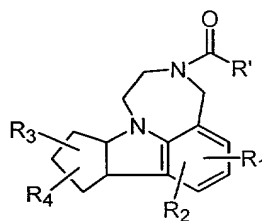
; and either

f) deacylating the acylated compound of step e) to provide a compound of the formula:



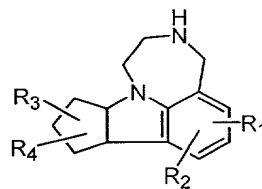
5 which may optionally be reduced; or

g) reducing the acylated compound of step e) to provide a compound of the formula:

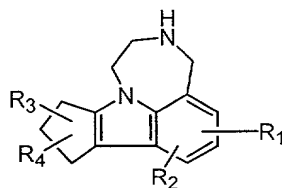


10 and

h) deacylating the compound of step g) to provide a compound of the formula:

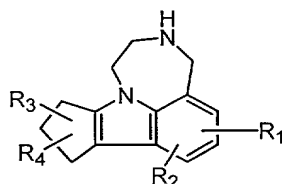


15 2) A process of Claim 1 for the production of a compound of the formula:

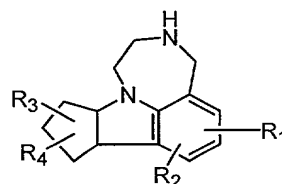


comprising the steps a) through f) of Claim 1, wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1.

- 5            3)        The process of Claim 2 with an additional step of reducing the compound of the formula:

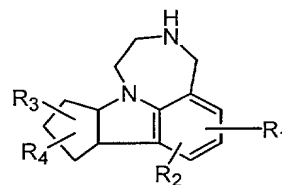


to produce a compound of the formula:

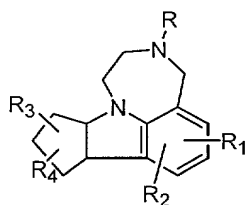


- 10        wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1.

4)        A process of Claim 3 further comprising the step of alkylating the compound of the formula:

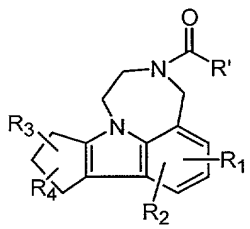


- 15        wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1, to provide an alkylated compound of the formula:

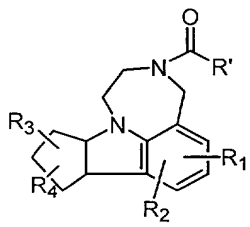


wherein R is an alkyl group of from 1 to 6 carbon atoms.

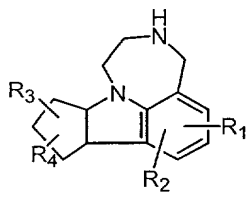
- 5) A process according to Claim 1 comprising steps a) through e) of Claim 1  
5 to provide an acylated compound of the formula:



followed by reduction of the acylated compound to provide a reduced acylated compound of the formula:

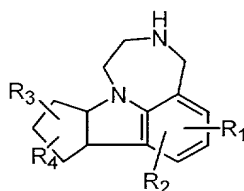


- 10 and deacylation of the reduced acylated compound to provide a compound of the formula:

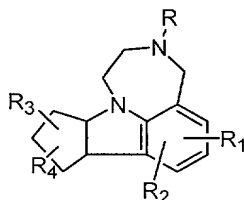


wherein R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, and R<sub>4</sub> are as defined in Claim 1.

- 15 6) A process of Claim 5 further comprising the step of alkylating the compound of the formula:

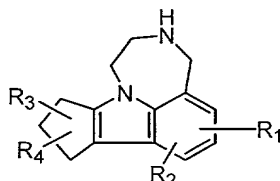


wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1, to provide an alkylated compound of the formula:

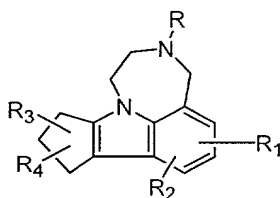


- 5 wherein  $R$  is an alkyl group of from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1.

7) A process of Claim 1 comprising steps a) through f) of Claim 1 to produce a compound of the formula:



10 wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1, and further comprising the step of alkylating the compound to produce an alkylated compound of the formula:



15 wherein  $R$  is an alkyl group of from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1.

8) A process of Claim 1 wherein  $R$  is hydrogen and  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$ , and  $R_4$  are as defined in Claim 1.

- 10) A process of Claim 1 wherein R, R<sub>1</sub>, R<sub>2</sub>, R<sub>3</sub>, and R<sub>4</sub> are each hydrogen.

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